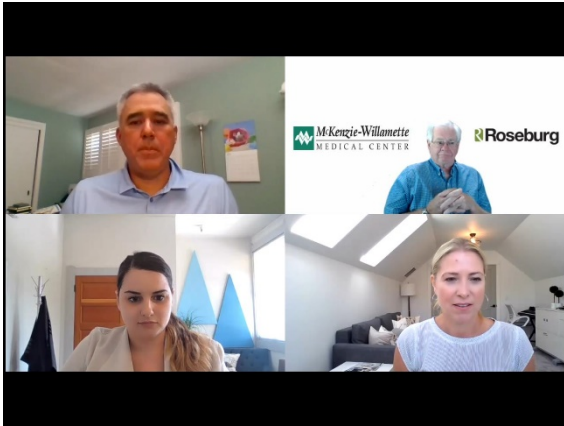


Baseball is coming to a Springfield location near you. Jamie Christopher, the general manager of the new Springfield Drifters baseball team, gave City Club members and friends an early look at what plans to be a new opportunity to see quality baseball coming next year.



The Springfield Drifters will be a team made up of collegiate players (including community colleges like LCC) from all over the country seeking to develop and improve their skills as part of the West Coast League, a summer league of amateur players. Team members will be selected by references from collegiate coaches who want their players to improve skills between their college seasons. There is a limit of no more than four players from the same college.

The effort is being led by Mr. Christopher, Kelly Richardson, the owner of Richardson Sports located in Gateway, and Ike Olsen, the former owner of Olsen Electric, who have partnered with

Huddle Up, a non-profit organization seeking to support underserved youth, and the Springfield School District.

Plans have been submitted to convert the existing baseball field at Hamlin Middle School to a stadium seating 1500 or more which will serve both the Drifters, Bushnell University (which is trying to bring collegiate baseball back after a 50-year absence), and local high schools whose fields sometimes become unusable during and after rain events. The field will be all turf and should be useable very quickly after any rain event. The stadium will have concession stands and other fan amenities. During the first season, the focus will be on baseball and the fan amenities may grow in the future to meet fan desires. Ticket prices should be in the range of \$6-7 per person. School District 19 will continue to own the land on which the stadium is constructed, Mr. Christopher hopes that the stadium might be used for concerts and other events when no baseball season is running.

The West Coast League consists of 16 teams from the Northwest and Canada and includes the Corvallis Knights (who had to approve the new team, since West Coast League rules require that teams be at least 50 miles apart). It uses wood bats, unlike high school and college teams which use aluminum, and tries to give players a feel for what it might be like to play professionally after college.



West Coast League

- Oregon
 - Bend Elks
 - Corvallis Knights
 - Cowitz Black Bears
 - Portland Pickles
 - **SPRINGFIELD DRIFTERS**
- Washington
 - Bellingham Belts
 - Port Angeles Lumberjacks
 - Ridgefield Raptors
 - Walla Walla Sweets
 - Wenatchee AppleSax
 - Yakima Valley Pippins
- Canada
 - Edmonton Riverhawks
 - Kamloops NorthPaws
 - Kelowna Falcons
 - Nanaimo Night Owls
 - Victoria HarbourCats

All the players are amateurs and receive no compensation other than room and board, which the Drifters hope to provide by placing players with host families. Because the players are college students, the team will follow all NCAA rules. There may be some opportunities for paid internships to help players learn the business aspects of baseball. The Drifters expect to have about a 70-game season starting in June, with approximately 30-35 games at home. (In their inaugural season the schedule might need to be adjusted to accommodate the world track championships which are being held in Eugene.) The league should not have an impact on American Legion baseball, since that program draws mostly high school players.

The leadership team is now seeking sponsors and members of a founder's club to help raise money to support the operation of the team. The team also plans to help develop programs for children supported by some part of ticket sales and sports camps and donations to local food banks working through Huddle Up.

More information is available at the team website Drifters.com or by contacting Jamie at jamiec@driftersbaseball.com or 541-579-1505.

Finds us

- driftersbaseball.com
- Facebook – Springfield Drifters Baseball Club
- Instagram/Twitter - @driftersbball
- Me:
 - jamiec@driftersbaseball.com
 - 541-579-1505
- Questions?

